

Acworth Meeting House
Acworth (Facing town Green)
Sullivan County
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH-54

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ACWORTH MEETING HOUSE

Location: Acworth, Sullivan County, New Hampshire (Faces town Green).

Present Owner: Acworth Congregational Church and the town of Acworth.

Brief Statement of Significance: One of the best preserved and more elaborately decorated of the larger meeting houses in the middle Connecticut River Valley.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1821.
2. Builder: Elias Carter who built numerous Connecticut Valley churches.
3. Original plans: There is evidence of the use of Asher Benjamin's hand books.
4. Notes on alterations and additions: Originally the meeting house contained one single, high room with two tiers of windows. In the 1880's, an intermediate floor was added between the tiers of windows dividing the interior into upper and lower floors. The main meeting room is now on the second floor with decor typical of the 1880's. Smaller rooms are on the first floor. The side windows are of the 1880's, but the facade remains in original condition.

B. References

1. Federal Writers' Project, New Hampshire; A Guide to the Granite State (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1938), 363-364.
2. White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs, XI, No. 5 (1925), LV-LVIII.

- C. Important Old Views: None known by town librarian.
- D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Town history in Library. Town and Church records.

Prepared by Dr. Frank J. Roos, Jr.,
University of Illinois, for National
Park Service, 143 South Third Street,
Philadelphia 6, Pa. - July 1959.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

- 1. Architectural interest and merit: A large frame 1821 meeting house, well preserved and elaborately decorated with notable detail, possibly from Asher Benjamin's hand books.
- 2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

- 1. Two stories plus tower - c. 72' wide.
- 2. Foundations: Granite on fieldstone.
- 3. Wall construction: Timber frame, clapboards on sides; beams pegged and mortised. Enclosed porch on front with two storey pilasters.
- 4. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: First storey, three doors on enclosed porch. Side doors, round arched fans with louvres; central door, ovoid fan light and side lights. Much attached molding detail around door heads.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Louvred Palladian windows over central door. In pediment, vertical ovoid window with carving. 12/12 light double hung windows on facade.
- 5. Roof - shape - covering: Gable roof. Tower above; first stage square with Palladian window; second stage open

with arches and double pilasters and entablature; third stage octagonal with pilasters and entablature with guttae blocks, fourth stage octagonal with painted ovoid panels, pilasters and entablature. Topped by ('S' profile) dome with weathervane.

Cornice, eaves: horizontal and raking cornice of facade have unusual substitute for triglyphs.

6. Chimneys: 2.
7. Stoops: Large, granite steps.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor Plan: See notes on alterations and additions, Part I.4 -- all interior detail revised in the 1880's.
2. Stairways: Either side of entrance hall from first to second floor.
3. Floor: Random width pine.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: From the 1880's except for some classic revival wall paper left in two small rooms on either side of chancel -- Corinthian columns printed about 8' high with frieze details reminiscent of frieze details on front pediment.
5. Doorways and doors and trim: Existing, from the 1880's remodelling of the building.
6. Hardware: No old.
7. Lighting: Electric.
8. Heating: Central.

D. Site

1. General Setting and Orientation: On rise at north end of village green - faces south.
2. Landscaping: Lawn.

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